

STATE

ACTION: NONE INFO: ODPS-S, RF, FILE, CR/WH, D/FBIS-2, EPS/EG-2,
FR, IAD/CAS-3, LA-3, NIO/LA, OCO/WE, OGCR/ER-2, ORPA/II-2, ORPA/LAD,
ORPA/LAY, ORPA/RO-2, ORPA/SA-3, PCS/INT, (28/W)

79 2883023/

PAGE 001

NC 2883023

TOR: 041310Z AUG 79

RR RUEAIIB
ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH
TUTS419
RR RUEHC
DE RUESAS #3540 2132045
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 012030Z AUG 79
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6745
INFO RUFHOL/AMEMBASSY BONN 152
RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 365
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3540

PO8

E.O. 12065: GDS 8/1/85 (KAY, ANDREW R.) OR-P;
TAGS: PGOV, PA
SUBJECT: NAZI WAR CRIMINAL DR. JOSEF MENGELE

REF: ASUNCION 2798

1. (UNC) BOTH OF ASUNCION'S LEADING DAILIES "HOY" AND "ABC" CARRIED PROMINENT ARTICLES AUGUST 1 REGARDING ALLEGED LOSS OF PARAGUAYAN CITIZENSHIP BY NAZI WAR CRIMINAL DR. JOSEF MENGELE. THE STORIES ARE BASED ON WIRE SERVICE REPORTS OUT OF VIENNA WHERE SIMON WIESENTHAL, DIRECTOR OF THE HEWISH DOCUMENTATION CENTER, REPORTED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED WORD FROM UN SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM THAT MENGELE'S PARAGUAYAN CITIZENSHIP HAD BEEN ANNULLED. HOY REPORTED THAT IN DIRECT TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH WIESENTHAL IN VIENNA HE HAD CONFIRMED THE STORY.

2. (UNC) PARAGUAYAN AUTHORITIES IN ASUNCION HAVE DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CANCELLATION OF MENGELE'S CITIZENSHIP. INTERIOR MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY BESTARD TOLD ABD THAT HE KNEW ABSOLUTELY NOTHING AND CLAIMED THE CITIZENSHIP QUESTION WAS A JUDICIAL MATTER. SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT MORALES TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE MATTER EITHER. HOWEVER, PARAGUAY'S AMBASSADOR TO THE US, LOPEZ ESCOBAR, TOLD ABC BY TELEPHONE THAT MENGELE HAD LOST HIS PARAGUAYAN

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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79 2883023

PAGE 002
TOR: 041310Z AUG 79

NC 2883023

CITIZENSHIP AS THE RESULT OF HIS ABSENCE FROM PARAGUAY. LOPEZ ESCOBAR EXPLAINED, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS REPORT, THAT A NATURALIZED CITIZEN WHO LEAVES FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS LOSES HIS RIGHT TO CITIZENSHIP. THE AMBASSADOR CLAIMED MENGELE HAD LEFT PARAGUAY MANY YEARS AGO BUT HIS WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN.

3. (C) REFTEL INDICATED THAT GOP OFFICIALS WERE DEFINITELY THINKING OF STRIPPING MENGELE'S CITIZENSHIP IN THE SAME MANNER AS SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM REPORTEDLY INFORMED SIMON WIESENTHAL. UN REP KRISHAND SINGH TOLD ADCM HE FELT CERTAIN UN SEC GEN HAD GIVEN NO SUCH UDNERTAKING TO SIMON WIESENTHAL BECUASE LOCAL UN OFFICE HAD NO MORE KNOWLEDGE THAN ANY OTHER FORIEGN MISSION HERE WHETHER MENGELE WAS OR WAS NOT STILL A PARAGUAYAN CITIZEN OR WHERE HE MIGHT BE IN PARAGUAY IF HE STILL IS HERE. EMBASSY HAS SO FAR BEEN UNALBE TO OBTAIN CONFIRMATION FROM PARAGUAYAN OFFICIALS THAT ACTION WAS TAKEN.

4. (C) MENGELE CASE WAS PRIME TOPIC OF CONVERSATION AT SWISS NATIONAL DAY AUGUST 1. GERMAN AMBASSADOR TOLD CHARGE BONN HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO PRESS FOR POSITIVE ACTION ON PART OF GOP TAKING AWAY MENGELE'S CITIZENSHIP AND OPENING HIM TO EXTRADITION. HE HAS SPOKEN WITH FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES, SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT MORALES AND INTERIOR UNDER-SECRETARY BESTARD IN THE LAST WEEK BUT WITH REPORT OF WEISENTHAL STATEMENT IN HAND, HE PLANS TO REDOUBLE EFFORTS TO GET FORMAL GOP WIRT DENATURALIZING MENGELE, AFTER WHICH HE CAN INSIST ON EXTRADITION REQUEST PENDING SINCE 1967. CHARGE OFFERED FULL SUPPORT OF US EMBASSY WHEN FRG AMBASSADOR FELT OUR SUPPORT WOULD BE USEFUL; MEANWHILE, WE WOULD USE EVERY INFORMAL OPPORTUNITY TO COUNSEL GOP, AS AMBASSADOR WHITE HAD BEFORE DEPARTURE (REFTEL, TO SPRUCE UP REGIME'S IMAGE BY GETTING RID OF MENGELE. MOST OUTSIDERS FEEL THAT SOME IN GOP FELT THEY COULD GE RID OF MENGELE INCUBUS BY SIMPLY SAYING HE WAS NO LONGER A CITIZEN BUT VERY ACTO OF MENTIONING HIS STATUS HAS RE-AWAKENED CONTROVERSY AND REMINDED EVERYONE WHO HAD BEEN PROTECTING MENEGLE FOR SO LONG.
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END OF MESSAGE

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